

In envisioning our journey, we like to think that progress in a transition will look like a straight line (drop in dotted line)

Actually, we know that in a transition, progress typically looks more like this (drop in the curve)

Because the first stage is often about losing focus.

What was clear is no longer clear. You can't make decisions.

But as a result, you tend to cope by minimizing the impact of a change. This is stage two.

We keep doing what we've always done, because there is nothing yet telling us to do it differently

But when the change starts to present itself, we fall downward into "The Pit" (stage three)

We may want something new, but it hasn't come yet, so we cling desperately to the past

But the past we knew is no longer there.

Even pleasant transitions have a pit.

Stage Four: This is where things get really scary.

Before we can move on, we have to let go—even before the new stage presents itself

Think of this as the space between the trapeze

You need something firm to catch onto

Stage Five: You have grabbed onto your new reality, but you're still a little unsure

It's called "Testing the Limits"

It's like when you first ride a bike and you're still a little wobbly.

Stage Six: You think you have a feel for things, you "get it," but you can't really see how it all comes together

Things are not regularized. You may not feel the synergy you had in the past

you are still "Searching for Meaning"

Finally, in stage seven you are integrating. You're back, focused on mission, and moving forward.

When you can do this, dissolve your transition committee
Or turn it into a book club.

A couple things about this progression:

1. These stages can go in and out. They are not necessarily in linear order.
2. Not everyone goes through them at the same pace.

Identifying Cultural Barriers for Change



- Peter Drucker: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”
 - Even the best plans don’t fly if you are not talking the same language
- **When cultures collide in a transition process you add misperceptions to high emotion!**
- Cultural barriers are easier when people know they are present
 - What happens when they are invisible?
- We have cultures in our Church, our country, even our within our own families.

We know cultural differences are present when people speak a different language (e.g. Spanish, Vietnamese).

People generally try to be respectful.

They may not succeed, but they know to be careful.

But some of our toughest conflicts happen when culture clashes between people who are of the same race and talk the same language

Example: Changing school uniforms touches on issues of aesthetics, class, economics

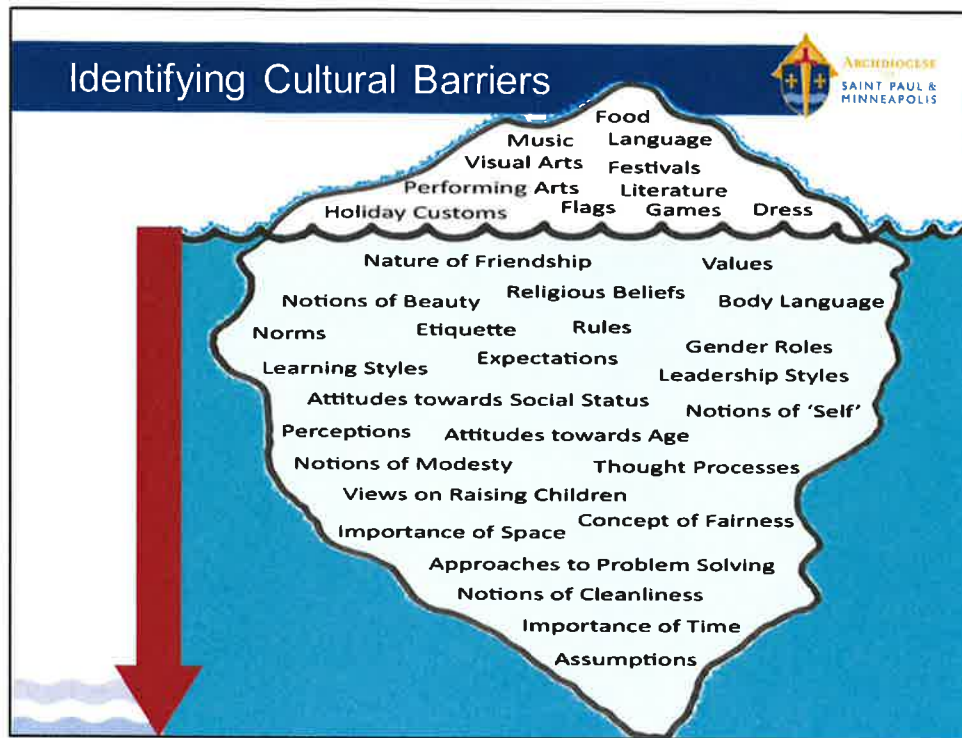
They may not say it that way, but it plays out as you talk to people:

“I don’t want my kid wearing a tie to school.”

“I can’t afford to buy new clothes for my four children in Catholic schools”

“Plaid skirts are so 1950’s”

Each of these statements reflects values.



One helpful tool for identifying culture is the following model based on the work of Episcopal priest Eric Law.

Law identified those cultural differences that are obvious (those things above the water line)

and separated them from things that are not always visible.

We get in trouble when we assume that, because we understand what's above the water line, we know how someone will react below the waterline.

And it can be very subtle:

For example, several years ago, I was talking to a new pastor who was very frustrated with his pastoral council. He found that every time he put ideas before them asking their advice, they automatically rubber stamped him.

"Yes, Father." "Sounds great, Father" EVEN when he knew that he needed more data.

He felt that they had been taught to agree with the pastor no matter what.

I encouraged him to schedule some time on the meeting to talk about what he wanted from them.

When I checked back in with him months later, he said they were starting to come forward gradually, and he knew to prompt them for their honest thoughts.

Being Intentional About Parish Culture



- Look at the iceberg diagram below the waterline.
- What is one thing that is part of the culture of your parish that might not be apparent to a new person coming in?

Take your notes on the “hidden culture” and share with your new pastor— incorporate into the binder where you can.



These differences play out in a parish as well. Think about how these things would play out at your parish.

(BULLETS)

Let me give you an example that a parish came up with a few years ago:

- A large, suburban parish back in the sixties organized their parish in guilds
- The guilds were organized by neighborhoods and were charged with organizing the funeral receptions for their neighbors.
- This parishioner said, “Even though the guilds went away formally in the 1980’s, we have cliques in our parish that still follow the guild system.”

Think about how important that is for a pastor to know if he’s trying to get things done, making the parish more hospitable or newcomers feel included?

What’s the “hidden culture” of your parish?”